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# THE NEW WORLD

POEMS

BY LAURENCE BINYON

ELKIN MATHEWS  
CORK STREET, W.



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# THE NEW WORLD

BY THE SAME WRITER

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LONDON VISIONS

THE WINNOWING-FAN

THE ANVIL



# THE NEW WORLD

POEMS

BY LAURENCE BINYON  
///

LONDON: ELKIN MATHEWS  
CORK STREET MCMXVIII

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## MORN LIKE A THOUSAND SHINING SPEARS

MORN like a thousand shining spears  
Terrible in the East appears.  
O hide me, leaves of lovely gloom,  
Where the young Dreams like lilies bloom !

What is this music that I lose  
Now, in a world of fading clues ?  
What wonders from beyond the seas  
And wild Arabian fragrances ?

In vain I turn me back to where  
Stars made a palace of the air.  
In vain I hide my face away  
From the too bright invading Day.

That which is come requires of me  
My utter truth and mystery.  
Return, you dreams, return to Night :  
My lover is the arméd Light.

## THE NEW WORLD

*To the people of the United States*

Now is the time of the splendour of Youth and  
Death.

The spirit of man grows grander than men knew.  
The unbearable burden is borne, the impossible  
done ;

Though harder is yet to do  
Before this agony end, and that be won  
We seek through blinding battle, in choking  
breath,—

The New World, seen in vision ! Land of lands,  
In the midst of storms that desolate and divide,  
In the hour of the breaking heart, O far-  
descried,

You build our courage, you hold up our hands.

Men of America, you that march to-day  
Through roaring London, supple and lean of  
limb,

Glimpsed in the crowd I saw you, and in your eye  
Something alert and grim,

As knowing on what stern call you march away  
To the wrestle of nations ; saw your heads held  
high

And, that same moment, far in a glittering  
beam

High over old and storied Westminster  
The Stars and Stripes with England's flag astir,  
Sisterly twined and proud on the air astream.

Men of America, what do you see ? Is it old  
Towers of fame and grandeur time-resigned ?  
The frost of custom's backward-gazing thought ?  
Seek closer ! You shall find

Miracles hour by hour in silence wrought ;  
Births, and awakenings ; dyings never tolled ;  
Invisible crumble and fall of prison-bars.

O, wheresoever his home, new or decayed,  
Man is older than all the things he has made  
And yet the youngest spirit beneath the stars.

Rock-cradled, white, and soaring out of the  
sea,

I behold again the fabulous city arise,  
Manhattan ! Queen of thronged and restless  
bays

And of daring ships is she.

O lands beyond, that into the sunset gaze,  
Limitless, teeming continent of surmise !  
I drink again that diamond air, I thrill  
To the lure of a wonder more than the wondrous  
    past,  
And see before me ages yet more vast  
Rising, to challenge heart and mind and will.

What sailed they out to seek, who of old came  
To that bare earth and wild, unhistoried coast ?  
Not gold, nor granaries, nay, nor a halcyon ease  
For the weary and tempest-tost :  
The unshaken soul they sought, possessed in  
    peace.

What seek we now, and hazard all on the aim ?  
In the heart of man is the undiscovered earth  
Whose hope's our compass ; sweet with glorious  
    passion  
Of men's good-will ; a world to forge and  
    fashion  
Worthy the things we have seen and brought  
    to birth.

Taps of the Drum ! Now once again they beat :  
And the answer comes ; a continent arms.  
    Dread,



Pity, and Grief, there is no escape. The call  
Is the call of the risen Dead.

Terrible year of the nations' trampling feet !

An angel has blown his trumpet over all

From the ends of the earth, from East to utter-  
most West,

Because of the soul of man, that shall not fail,

That will not make refusal, or turn, or quail,

No, nor for all calamity, stay its quest.

And here, here too, is the New World, born of  
pain

In destiny-spelling hours. The old world breaks

Its mould, and life runs fierce and fluid, a stream

That floods, dissolves, re-makes.

Each pregnant moment, charged to its extreme,

Quickens unending future, and all's vain

But the onward mind, that dares the oncoming  
years

And takes their storm, a master. Life shall then

Transfigure Time with yet more marvellous men.

Hail to the sunrise ! Hail to the Pioneers !

## THE SOWER

*(Eastern France)*

FAMILIAR, year by year, to the creaking wain  
Is the long road's level ridge above the plain.  
To-day a battery comes with horses and guns  
On the straight road, that under the poplars  
    runs,

At leisurely pace, the guns with mouths declined,  
Harness merrily ringing, and dust behind.  
Makers of widows, makers of orphans, they  
Pass to their burial business, alert and gay.

But down in the field, where sun has the furrow  
    dried,  
Is a man who walks in the furrow with even  
    stride.

At every step, with elbow jerked across,  
He scatters seed in a quick, deliberate toss,  
The immemorial gesture of Man confiding  
To Earth, that restores tenfold in a season's  
    gliding.

He is grave and patient, sowing his children's  
    bread :

He treads the kindly furrow, nor turns his head.

## STONEHENGE

GAUNT on the cloudy plain  
Stand the great Stones,  
Dwarfed in the vast reach  
Of a sky that owns

All the measure of earth  
Within its cloud-hung cave.  
Dumb stands the Circle  
As on a God's grave.

But clattering with horses  
Up from the valley,  
With horses and horsemen  
At a trot, gaily

Dragging the limbered guns,  
Youth comes riding,—  
Easy sits, mettlesome  
Horses bestriding.

## STONEHENGE

Fast come the twinkling hoofs,  
Light wheels and guns,  
Invading the upland,  
And sweep past the Stones.

Giant those shapes now  
Over them tower,—  
Time's dark stature  
Over Youth's fleet hour.

Ribs of dismemoried Earth,  
Guard what you may !  
The Immortals also  
Pass, nor stay.

## GUNS AT THE FRONT

MAN, simple and brave, easily confiding,  
 Giving his all, glad of the sun's sweetness,  
 Heeding little of pitiful incompleteness,  
 Mending life with laughter and cheerful chiding,

Where is he?—I see him not, but I hear  
 Sounds, charged with nothing but death and  
     maiming ;

Earth and sky empty of all but flaming  
 Bursts, and shocks that stun the waiting ear ;

Monsters roaring aloud with hideous vastness,  
*Nothing, Nothing, Nothing!* And man that  
     made them

Mightier far than himself, has stooped, and  
     obeyed them,  
 Schooled his mind to endure its own aghastness,

Serving death, destruction, and things inert,—  
 He the soarer, free of heavens to roam in,

He whose heart has a world of light to home in,  
Confounding day with darkness, flesh with dirt.

O, dear indeed the cause that so can prove him,  
Pitilessly self-tested ! If no cause beacons  
Beyond this chaos, better he bled unreckoned,  
With his own monsters bellowing madness above  
him.

## THE WITNESSES

## I

LADS in the loose blue,  
Crutched, with limping feet,  
With bandaged arm, that roam  
To-day the bustling street,

You humble us with your gaze,  
Calm, confiding, clear ;  
You humble us with a smile  
That says nothing but cheer.

Our souls are scarred with you!  
Yet, though we suffered all  
You have suffered, all were vain  
To atone, or to recall

The robbed future, or build  
The maimed body again  
Whole, or ever efface  
What men have done to men.

## THE WITNESSES

## II

Each body of straight youth,  
Strong, shapely, and marred,  
Shines as out of a cloud  
Of storm and splintered shard,

Of chaos, torture, blood,  
Fire, thunder, and stench :  
And the savage shattering noise  
Of churned and shaken trench

Echoes through myriad hearts  
In the dumb lands behind ;—  
Silent wailing, and bitter  
Tears of the world's mind !

You stand upon each threshold  
Without complaint.—What pen  
Dares to write half the deeds  
That men have done to men ?

## III

Must we be humbled more ?  
Peace, whose olive seems  
A tree of hope and heaven,  
Of answered prayers and dreams,



## THE WITNESSES

21

Peace has her own hid wounds ;  
She also grinds and maims.  
And must we bear and share  
Those old continued shames ?

Not only the body's waste  
But the mind's captivities—  
Crippled, sore, and starved—  
The ignorant victories

Of the visionless, who serve  
No cause, and fight no foe !  
Is a cruelty less sure  
Because its ways are slow ?

Now we have eyes to see.  
Shall we not use them then ?  
These bright wounds witness us  
What men may do to men.

## I AM HERE, AND YOU

I AM here, and you ;  
The sun blesses us through  
Leaves made of light.  
The air is in your hair ;  
You hold a flower.

O worlds, that roll through night,  
O Time, O terrible year,  
Where surges of fury and fear  
Rave, to us you gave  
This island-hour.

## DARK WIND

IN the middle of the night, waking, I was aware  
Of the Wind like one riding through black wastes  
    of the air,  
Moodily riding, ever faster, he recked not where.

The windows rattled aloud : a door clashed and  
    sprang ;  
And the ear in fear waited to feel the inert clang  
Strike the shaken darkness, a cruelty and a  
    pang.

I was hurt with pity of things that have no will  
    of their own,  
Lifted in lives of others and cast on bruising  
    stone :  
I feared the Wind, coming a power from worlds  
    unknown.

It was like a great ship now, abandoned, her  
crew dead,  
Driving in gulfs of sky ; it staggered above and  
sped ;  
I lay in the deeps and heard it rushing over  
my head.

And the helpless shaking of window and door's  
desolate rebound  
Seemed like tossing and lifting of bodies lost  
and drowned  
In the huge indifferent swell, in the waters'  
wandering sound.

## HUNGER

I COME among the peoples like a shadow.  
I sit down by each man's side.

None sees me, but they look on one another,  
And know that I am there.

My silence is like the silence of the tide  
That buries the playground of children ;

Like the deepening of frost in the slow night,  
When birds are dead in the morning.

Armies trample, invade, destroy,  
With guns roaring from earth and air.

I am more terrible than armies,  
I am more feared than the cannon.

Kings and chancellors give commands ;  
I give no command to any ;

But I am listened to more than kings  
And more than passionate orators.

I unswear words, and undo deeds.  
Naked things know me.

I am first and last to be felt of the living.  
I am Hunger.

## STRIKE STONE ON STEEL

STRIKE stone on steel,  
Fire replies.  
Strike men that feel,  
The answer is in their eyes.

Powers that are willed to break  
The spirit in limbs of pain,  
See what spirit you wake !  
Strike, and strike again !

You hammer sparks to a flame,  
And the flame scorches your hand.  
You have given the feeble an aim,  
You have made the sick to stand.

You shape by stroke on stroke  
Man mightier than he knew ;  
And the fire your hammer woke  
Is a life that is death to you.

## SPRING HAS LEAPT INTO SUMMER

SPRING has leapt into Summer.  
 A glory has gone from the green.  
 The flush of the poplar has sobered out,  
 The flame in the leaf of the lime is dulled :  
 But I am thinking of the young men  
 Whose faces are no more seen.

Where is the pure blossom  
 That fell and refused to grow old ?  
 The clustered radiance, perfumed whiteness,  
 Silent singing of joy in the blue ?  
 —I am thinking of the young men  
 Whose splendour is under the mould.

Youth, the wonder of the world,  
 Open-eyed at an opened door,  
 When the world is as honey in the flower, and  
     as wine  
 To the heart, and as music newly begun !



O the young men, the myriads of the young men,  
Whose beauty returns no more !

Spring will come, when the Earth remembers,  
In sun-bursts after the rain,  
And the leaf be fresh and lovely on the bough,  
And the myriad shining blossom be born :  
But I shall be thinking of the young men  
Whose eyes will not shine on us again.

## THE ENGLISH YOUTH

THERE is a dimness fallen on old fames.  
 Our hearts are solemnized with dearer names  
 Than Time is bright with : we have not heard  
     alone,  
 Or read of it in books ; it is our own  
 Eyes that have seen this wonder ; like a song,  
 It is in our mouths for ever. There was wrong  
 Done, and the world shamed. Honour blew the  
     call ;  
 And each one's answer was as natural  
 And quiet as the needle's to the pole.  
 Who gave must give himself entire and whole.  
 So, books were shut ; and young dreams shaken  
     out  
 In cold air ; dear ambitions done without,  
 And a stark duty shouldered. And yet they  
 Who now must narrow to their arduous day  
 Did not forget their nurture, nor the kind  
 Muses of earth, nor joys of eager mind,—  
 Graced in their comradeship, and prizing more  
 Life's beauty, and all the sweetness at the core,

Because of that loathed business they were set  
To do and finish. It was the world's debt,  
Claiming all: but they knew, and would not wince  
From that exaction on their flesh; and since  
They did not seek for glory, our hearts add  
A more than glory to that hope they had  
And gloriously and terribly achieved.

O histories of old time, half-believed,  
None needs to wrong the modesty of truth  
In matching with your legend England's youth.  
But all renown that fearless arms could win  
For proud adventuring wondrous Paladin  
Is glimmering laurel now: Romance, that was  
The coloured air of a forgotten cause  
About the heads of heroes dead and bright,  
Shines home. We are accompanied with light  
Because of youth among us; and the name  
Of man is touched with an ethereal flame;  
There is a newness in the world begun,  
A difference in the setting of the sun.  
Oh, though we stumble in blinding tears, and  
    though  
The beating of our hearts may never know  
Absence in pangs more desolately keen,  
Yet blessed are our eyes because they have seen.

## OXFORD IN WAR-TIME

WHAT alters you, familiar lawn and tower,  
Arched alley, and garden green to the grey wall  
With crumbling crevice and the old wine-red  
    flower,  
Solitary in summer sun ? for all

Is like a dream : I tread on dreams ! No stir  
Of footsteps, voices, laughter ! Even the chime  
Of many-remembered bells is lonelier  
In this neglected ghostliness of Time.

What stealing touch of separation numb  
Absents you ? Yet my heart springs up to adore  
The shrining of your soul, that is become  
Nearer and oh, far dearer than before.

It is as if I looked on the still face  
Of a Mother, musing where she sits alone.  
She is with her sons, she is not in this place ;  
She is gone out into far lands unknown.

Because that filled horizon occupies  
 Her heart with mute prayer and divining fear,  
 Therefore her hands so calm lie, and her eyes  
 See nothing ; and men wonder at her here :

But far in France ; on the torn Flanders plain ;  
 By Sinai ; in the Macedonian snows ;  
 The fly-plagued sands of Tigris, heat and rain ;  
 On wandering water, where the black squall  
     blows

Less danger than the bright wave ambushes,  
 She bears it out. All the long day she bears  
 And the sudden hour of instant challenges  
 To act, that searches all men, no man spares.

She is with her sons, leaving a virtue gone  
 Out of her sacred places : what she bred  
 Lives other life than this, that sits alone,  
 Though still in dream starrily visited !

For O in youth she lives, not in her age.  
 Her soul is with the springtime and the young ;  
 And she absents her from the learned page,  
 Studious of high histories yet unsung,

More passionately prized than wisdom's book  
Because her own. Her faith is in those eyes  
That clear into the gape of hell can look,  
Putting to proof ancient philosophies

Such as the virgin Muses would rehearse  
Beside the silvery, swallow-haunted stream,  
Under the grey towers. But immortal verse  
Is now exchanged for its immortal theme—

Victory ; proud loss ; and the enduring mind ;  
Youth, that has passed all praises, and has won  
More than renown, being that which faith  
divined,  
Reality more radiant than the sun.

She gave, she gives, more than all anchored days  
Of dedicated lore, of storied art ;  
And she resigns her beauty to men's gaze  
To mask the riches of her bleeding heart.

## THE DEAD TO THE LIVING

O you that still have rain and sun,  
Kisses of children and of wife  
And the good earth to tread upon,  
And the mere sweetness that is life,  
Forget not us, who gave all these  
For something dearer, and for you.  
Think in what cause we crossed the seas !  
Remember, he who fails the Challenge  
Fails us too.

Now in the hour that shows the strong—  
The soul no evil powers affray—  
Drive straight against embattled Wrong :  
Faith knows but one, the hardest, way.  
Endure ; the end is worth the throe.  
Give, give, and dare ; and again dare !  
On, to that Wrong's great overthrow.  
We are with you, of you ; we the pain  
And victory share.

## KITCHENER

THIS is the man who, sole in Britain, sole  
In Europe, by profounder instinct, knew  
The strength of Britain ; and that strength he  
drew

Slow into act, upshouldering the whole  
Vast weight of effort. Eyes full on the goal  
Saw nothing less ; he held his single clue,  
Heedless of obstacle ; intent to do  
His one task forthright with unshaken soul.

This is the man whom, dead, the meanest match  
With their own stature ; give tongue, and grow  
brave

On the imperfection fools have wit to espy.  
His silence towers the grander for their cry,  
Troubling his fame no more than yelp and  
scratch

Of jackal could disturb that ocean-grave.



## THE TEST

NAKED reality, and menace near  
As fire to scorching flesh, shall not affright  
The spirit that sees, with danger-sharpened  
sight,

What it must save or die for ; not the mere  
Name, but the thing, now doubly, trebly dear,  
Freedom ; the breath those hands would choke ;  
the light

They would put out ; the clean air they would  
blight,

Making earth rank with hate, and greed, and  
fear.

Now no man's loss is private : all share all.

Oh, each of us a soldier stands to-day,

Put to the proof and summoned to the call ;

One will, one faith, one peril. Hearts, be high,

Most in the hour that's darkest ! Come what  
may,

The soul in us is found, and shall not die.

## YPRES

SHE was a city of patience ; of proud name,  
Dimmed by neglecting Time ; of beauty and  
loss ;

Of acquiescence in the creeping moss.

But on a sudden fierce destruction came  
Tigerishly pouncing : thunderbolt and flame  
Showered on her streets, to shatter them and  
toss

Her ancient towers to ashes. Riven across,  
She rose, dead, into never-dying fame.

White against heavens of storm, a ghost, she is  
known

To the world's ends. The myriads of the brave  
Sleep round her. Desolately glorified,  
She, moon-like, draws her own far-moving tide  
Of sorrow and memory ; toward her, each alone,  
Glide the dark Dreams that seek an English  
grave.

SOME of these poems have appeared before in the pages of the *Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Observer*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Spectator*, *Country Life*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Fortnightly Review*, and the *Collegian* ; and for permission to reprint them I have to thank the Editors.

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By LAURENCE BINYON

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